



DOCTOR STRANGE®

MARVEL

#23

HOPELESS
HENRICHON





STEPHEN STRANGE was a preeminent surgeon until a car accident damaged the nerves in his hands. His ego drove him to scour the globe for a miracle cure, but instead he found a mysterious wizard called the **ANCIENT ONE** who taught him magic and that there are things in this world bigger than himself. These lessons led Stephen to become the Sorcerer Supreme, Earth's first defense against all manner of magical threats. His patients call him...

DOCTOR STRANGE

A Cosmic Cube transformed Captain America into the ultimate Hydra sleeper agent – and the country is now under Hydra's control. Doctor Strange, Spider-Woman, and reporter Ben Urich have found an unexpected ally in Wilson Fisk, former Kingpin of crime, in their attempt to free New York City from the Darkforce dome that surrounds it. They also need to stop Baron Mordo, who assumed control of the city and is holding Daredevil prisoner. In need of a powerful enough weapon to fight Mordo, our heroes found their way to a secret stockpile of magical artifacts.

WRITER

DENNIS HOPELESS

ARTIST & COLORIST

NIKO HENRICHON

LETTERS

VC'S CORY PETIT

COVER

NIKO HENRICHON

JIM LEE VARIANT COVER

JIM LEE AND JESUS ABURTOV

ASSISTANT EDITOR

ALLISON STOCK

ASSOCIATE EDITOR

DARREN SHAN

EDITOR

NICK LOWE

EDITOR IN CHIEF

AXEL ALONSO

CHIEF CREATIVE OFFICER

JOE QUESADA

PRESIDENT

DAN BUCKLEY

EXECUTIVE PRODUCER

ALAN FINE

DOCTOR STRANGE CREATED BY **STAN LEE AND STEVE DITKO**



DAMN
IT ALL!



THE BEST LAID
PLANS OF MICE
AND MORDO...

IS THAT
SUPPOSED TO BE
A JOKE?

MORE INSINCERE
PLATITUDE THAN JOKE,
BUT I'M PLEASED YOU
FOUND IT FUNNY.



HOW ABOUT
THIS! DOES *THIS*
PLEASE THE
DAREDEVIL?!

NOT...
PARTICULARLY...



THEN AGAIN,
PERHAPS YOU
HAVE A POINT.

STRANGE'S
ESCAPE WAS MERE
HAPPENSTANCE.

YEAH, NO.
WILSON FISK
OUT-WIZARDED
YOU.

I WAS
JUST CRACKING
WISE.

THERE'S
NO NEED TO
DWELL.



WHAT I
NEED IS A
BIG WIN.

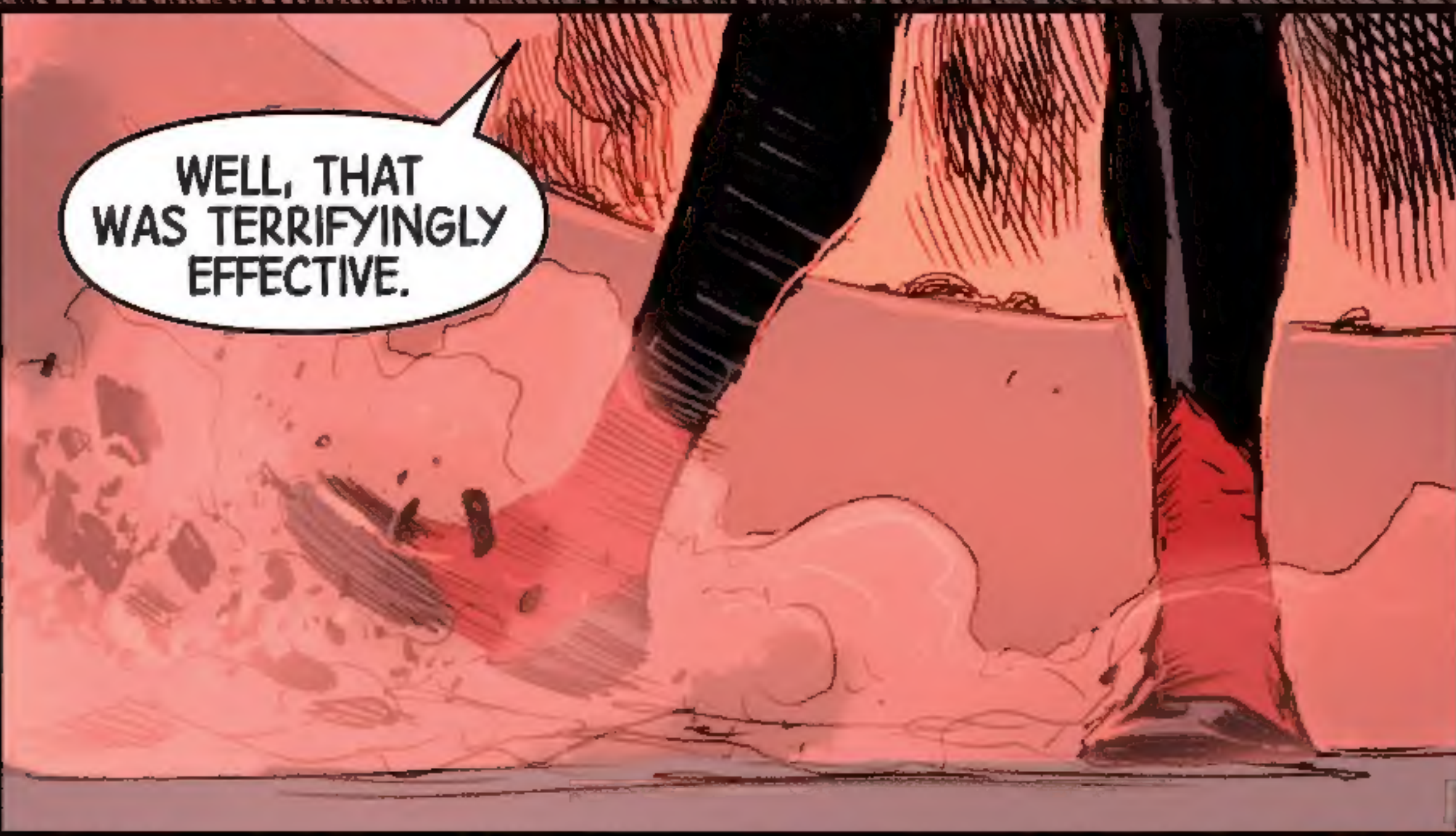
SOMETHING
TO BRIGHTEN MY
MOOD AND LIFT THIS
DAY BACK UP OUT
OF THE MUD.

YEAH,
SEE...



WHAT DO
YOU SAY WE
GO HURT SOME
OF YOUR
FRIENDS?

SHOULD
HAVE STUCK WITH
MEDITATING.



**DARK WITCH'S
SWANK PENTHOUSE.
UPPER EAST SIDE.**

WELL, THAT
WAS TERRIFYINGLY
EFFECTIVE.

WHAT WAS
THAT?! WHAT
DID YOU DO?

HOW THE
HELL SHOULD
I KNOW?

BUT
AT WHAT
COST?

ALWAYS.

YOU'RE STILL
WORRIED ABOUT
THE COST?



CARE TO
GIVE IT A
WHIRL?

URICH!

NOT
TO WORRY,
STRANGE.

YOU SAY
DON'T TOUCH
THE HORRIFYING
NIGHTMARE
SKULL...I
LISTEN.

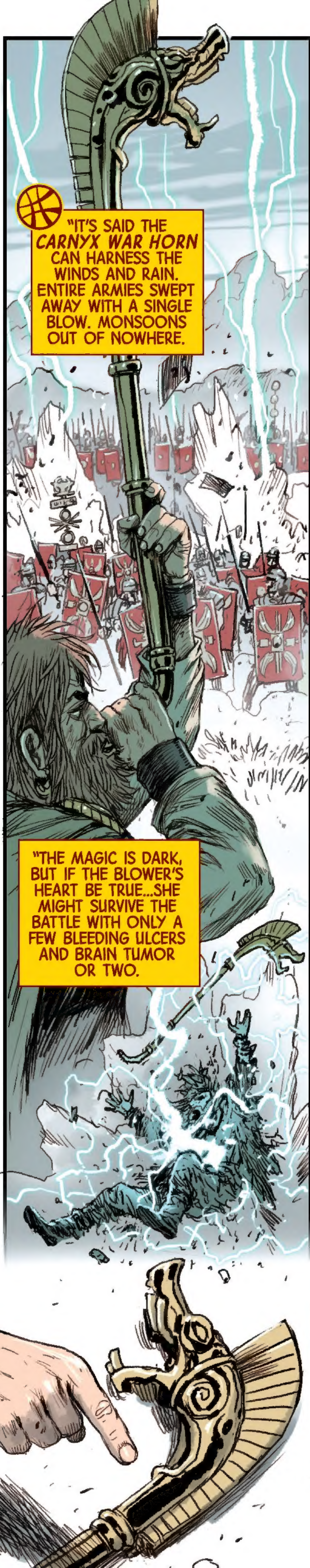
ARE WE
SURE THE
MAN EVEN HAD
A SOUL TO
BEGIN WITH?

QUITE
SURE.

BUT WE'RE
WELL PAST
THAT NOW.

I'M ONTO
CHOOSING OUR
LEAST DEADLY PATH
FORWARD.





"IT'S SAID THE CARNYX WAR HORN CAN HARNESS THE WINDS AND RAIN. ENTIRE ARMIES SWEEP AWAY WITH A SINGLE BLOW. MONSOONS OUT OF NOWHERE.

"THE MAGIC IS DARK, BUT IF THE BLOWER'S HEART BE TRUE...SHE MIGHT SURVIVE THE BATTLE WITH ONLY A FEW BLEEDING ULCERS AND BRAIN TUMOR OR TWO.



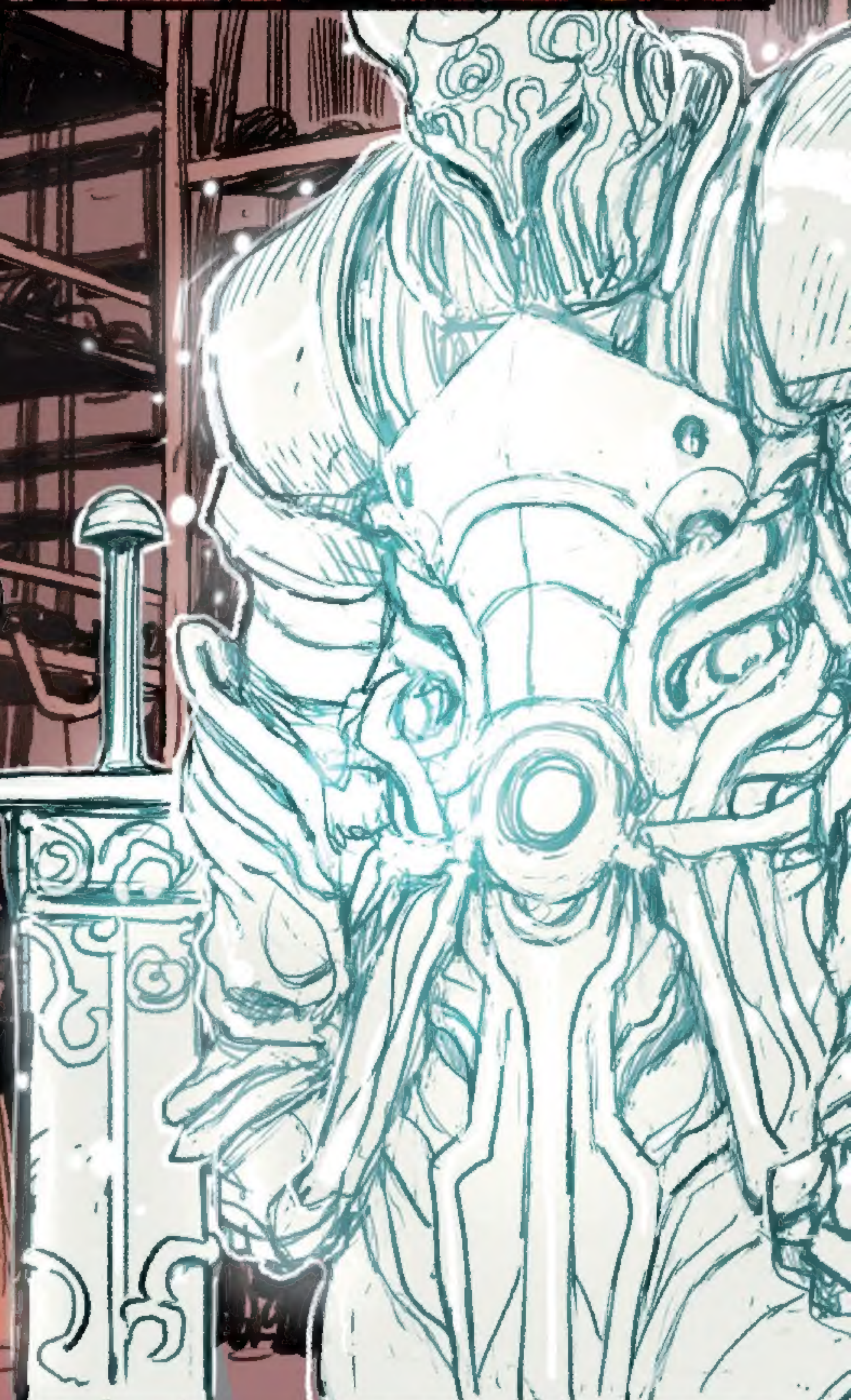
"THIS MAYAN DAGGER HAS NEVER LOST A BATTLE AND GIVES THE ADDED GIFT OF TURNING ENEMY BLOOD TO LIQUID GOLD.

"WIELDED SWIFTLY, I MIGHT DEFEAT MORDO WITH THIS... BEFORE SUCCUMBING TO RAVENOUS GREED AND PLUNGING THE BLADE INTO MY OWN GILDED HEART.



"THE NECKLACE OF BODIL WOULD, BELIEVE IT OR NOT, SUMMON A MASSIVE ARMY OF UNKILLABLE GHOST BEARS. NOT A BAD WAY TO GO...

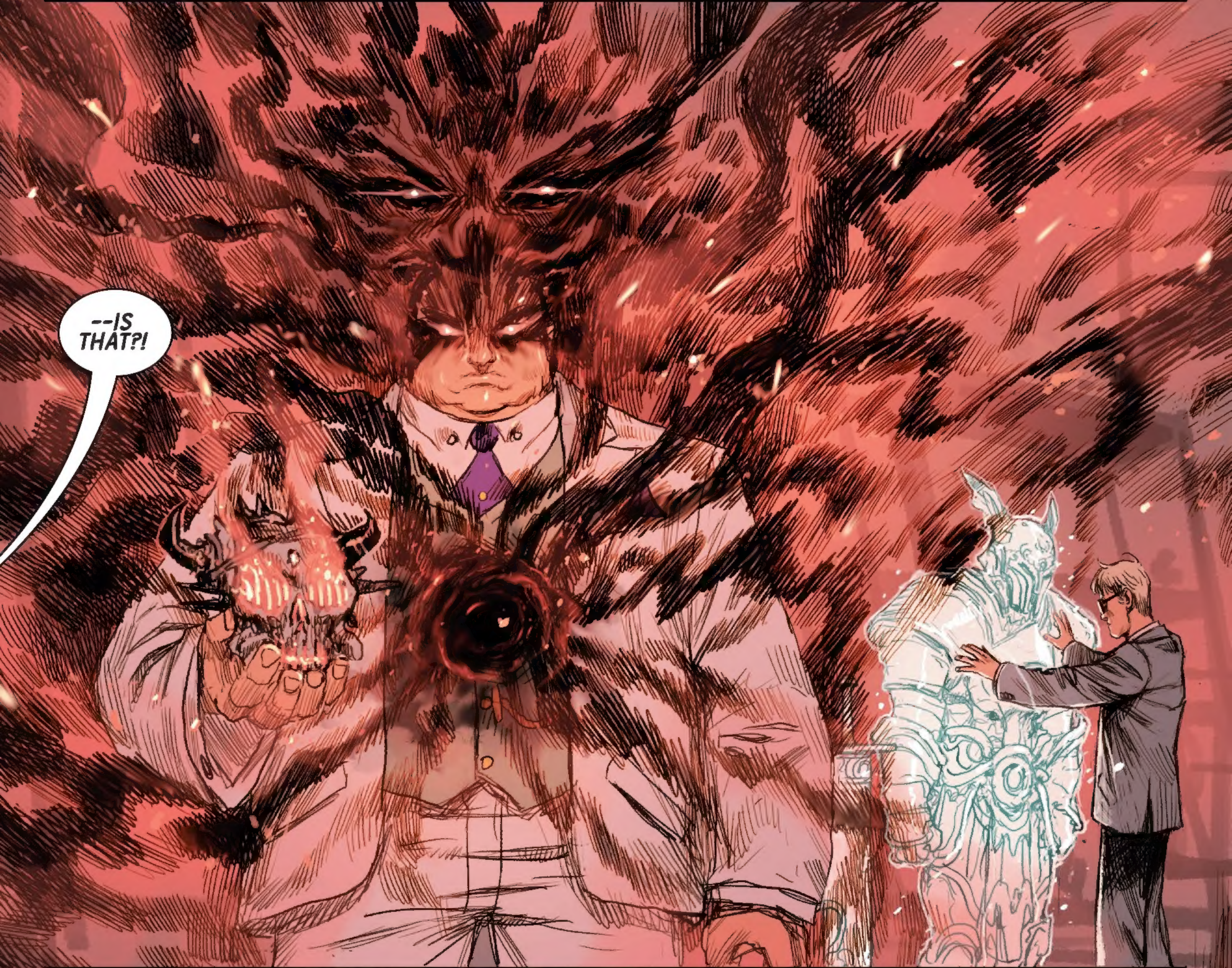
"...SO LONG AS ONE OF US IS COMFORTABLE SPENDING ONE NIGHT A MONTH AS A STARK-RAVING MINDLESS HALF-URSINE WEREBEAR."





WHOLLY
UNACCEPTABLE,
JESSICA.
SEE FOR
YOURSELF.

WHAT THE
@#%--



--IS
THAT?!



THAT'S OUR
SECOND BIGGEST
PROBLEM...



...ALSO KNOWN
AS THE JUVENILE
SMOKE DEMON CURRENTLY
FEASTING ON THE KINGPIN
OF CRIME'S IMMORTAL SOUL.



RAAAWWWK!

THE
BEAST
FELT OUR
GAZE!

CLEARLY.
TOSS ME THE
NECKLACE!

WHAT?!

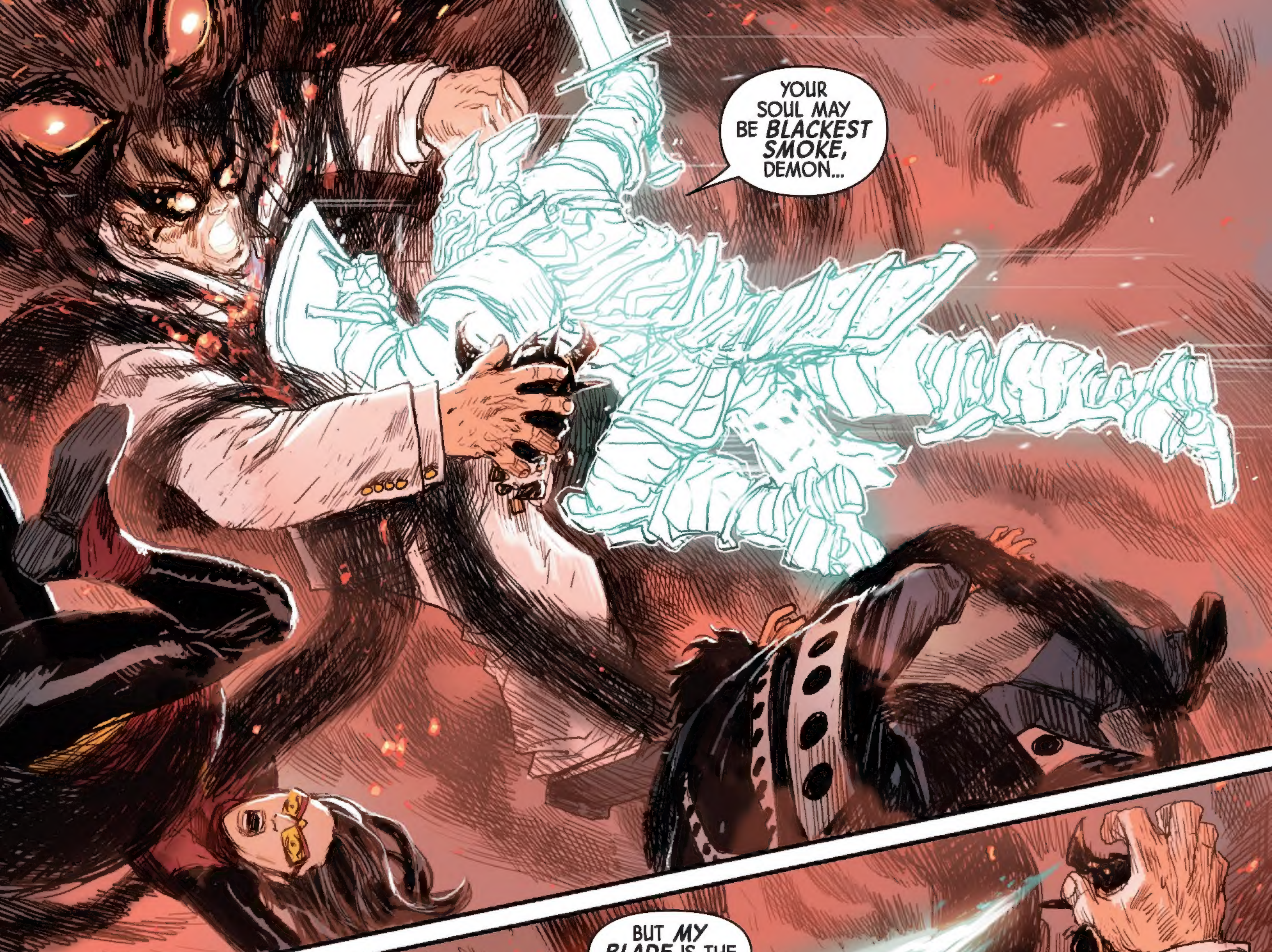


THE
GHOST BEAR
THING!

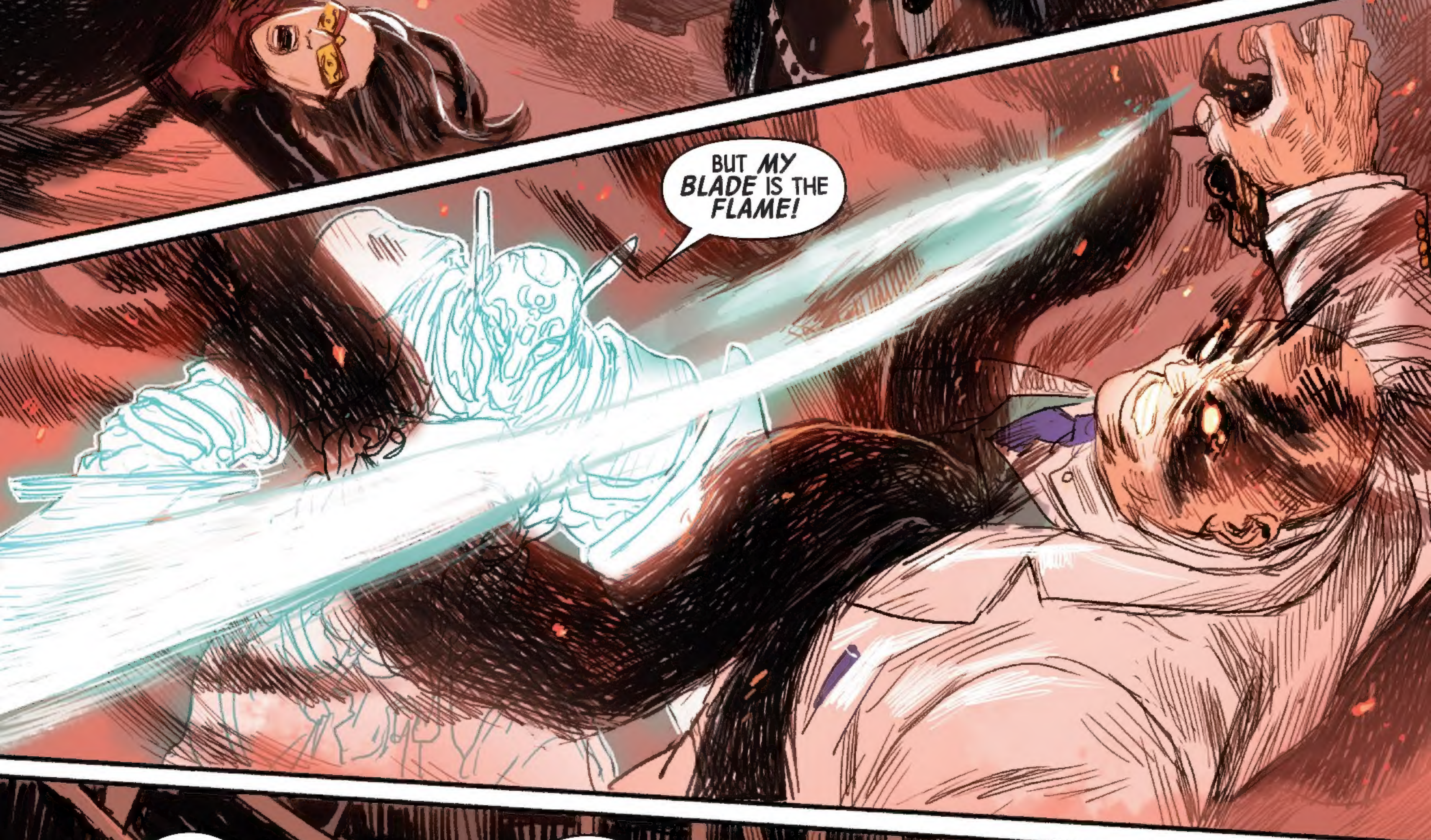
JESSICA,
NO!

YES!
I'LL BE A
WEREBEAR!

WHATEVER!



YOUR
SOUL MAY
BE **BLACKEST**
SMOKE,
DEMON...



BUT MY
BLADE IS THE
FLAME!



UMM...
HUH?

HEH HEH
HEH.

GOODNESS.

"NOW THERE'S
AN UNEXPECTED TWIST."

HEROES OF
MANHATTAN,
HELLO AT
LAST!

I'VE SEEN
YOUR SCHEMING
AND SCURRYING
FROM MY
TOWER.

AND I CARE.
I REALLY DO.
IT'S JUST SO HARD
TO FIND THE TIME
FOR THE LITTLE
THINGS.

YOU DON'T
STAND A
SNOWBALL'S
CHANCE.

NOT AGAINST
MORDO, THE
GREAT AND
POWERFUL. NOT
TODAY.

I'M ABOUT
TO INJURE AND
EMBARRASS YOU MOST
COMPLETELY.

BUT
HEY...

CLOAK:
DARKFORCE
TELEPORTER.

...EVERYBODY
LOVES AN
UNDERDOG.

IRON FIST:
MARTIAL ARTIST &
IMMORTAL
LIVING WEAPON.

BOY, THIS
FOOL IS JUST
ASKING FOR
IT.

LUKE CAGE:
UNBREAKABLE
BRAWLER.

BEGGING,
MORE LIKE.

SURVIVE THIS
SAVAGERY...

...AND YOU'LL
BE ABSOLUTELY
LEGENDARY.

RAAAAWK

DIBS!

WATCH
YOURSELF,
IRON FIST!



ROUNDHOUSE KICK--

--STRAIGHT TO THE JACKED-UP KISSER.



SHUT UP AND FIGHT, DANNY.

SICK SAVAGERY, CHOCULA--
--THAT THING'S NOTHING BUT A SLOPPY DRAGON.



AND THE IMMORTAL IRON FIST EATS DRAGONS FOR BREAKFAST.

GUESS WE'RE CALLING HIS BLUFF THEN?

YEAH...I DON'T KNOW ABOUT--



WHAT?!



HEY!



UNTONGUE ME!

KROOSH

YEAH. YEAH.
DROP ALL THE
CARS YOU LIKE,
MORDO!

IT'S GONNA
TAKE MORE
THAN A FEW
YELLOW CABS
TO SHAKE--

A
GARBAGE
TRUCK?!

YOU GOT ANY
IDEA HOW LONG
IT TAKES TO SCRUB
TRASH STANK OFF
UNBREAKABLE
SKIN?!

I'M ABOUT
TO **WHUP**
A WIZ--

--ARRRRDD!!!

LUKE!
STOP THIS.

MORDO MAY
LOOK LIKE A CHUMP
BUT HE'S HIDING A SERIOUS
GOD COMPLEX UNDER
THOSE SLYTHERIN
ROBES.

NOT TO
MENTION EVERY
OUNCE OF STRANGE'S
ACCUMULATED
HOCUS-POCUS.

TURN
AND RUN.
NOW.

COME
BACK WITH
AN ARMY...



...AND A PRAYER.

OOOH...
I CAN'T WAIT
TO HEAR WHAT
CAPTAIN RAINCOAT
HAS TO SAY.

YOU GLUM
GLOOMIES ALWAYS
HAVE FAMOUS LAST
WORDS.

WORDS
CAN'T WIN THIS
FIGHT AND NEITHER
CAN I.

MY CLOAK
ISN'T POWERFUL
ENOUGH TO FREE
MANHATTAN FROM
THIS DARK
DOME...

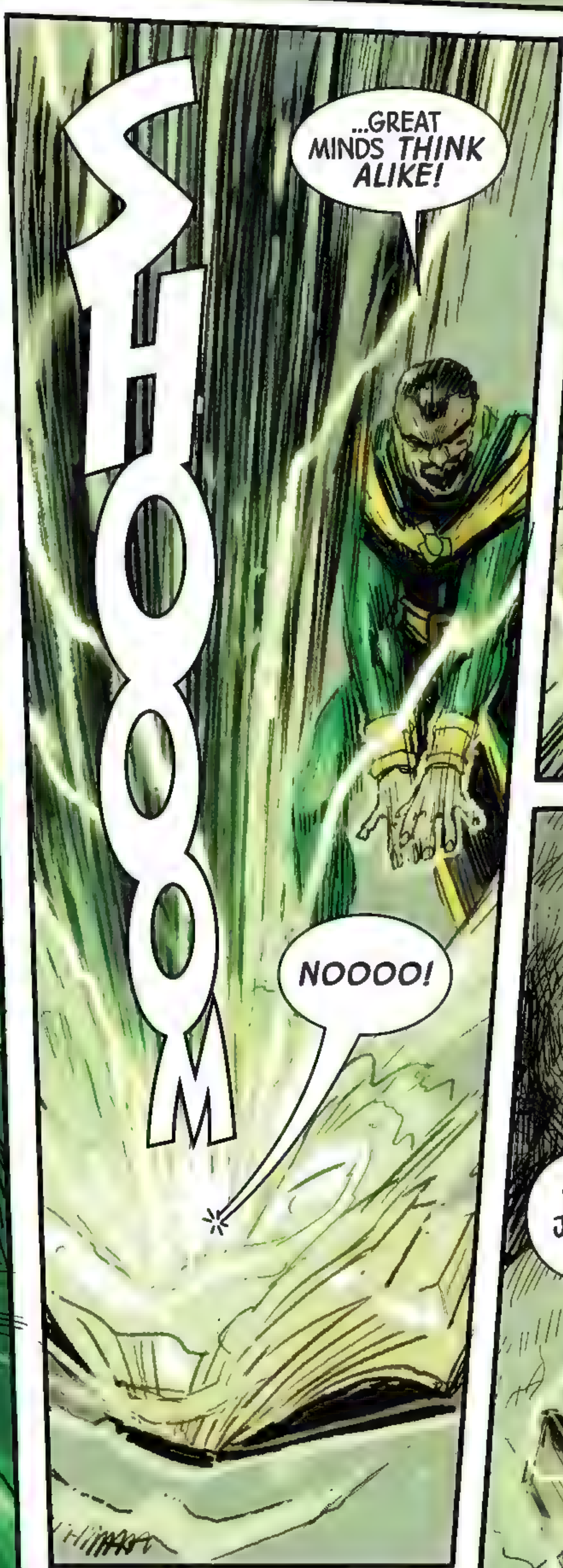


...BUT SHE
MIGHT HAVE JUST
ENOUGH POWER
LEFT TO TRANSPORT
YOUR SORRY BUTT
FROM YOUR
HELL...

...TO
MINE.

NOW, SEE...
THAT PLAN'S
NOT BAD. NOT
BAD AT ALL.

IN
FACT...



...GREAT
MINDS **THINK**
ALIKE!

NOOOO!



WHY BOTHER
FIGHTING...



...WHAT
YOU CAN
JUST LOCK
AWAY?

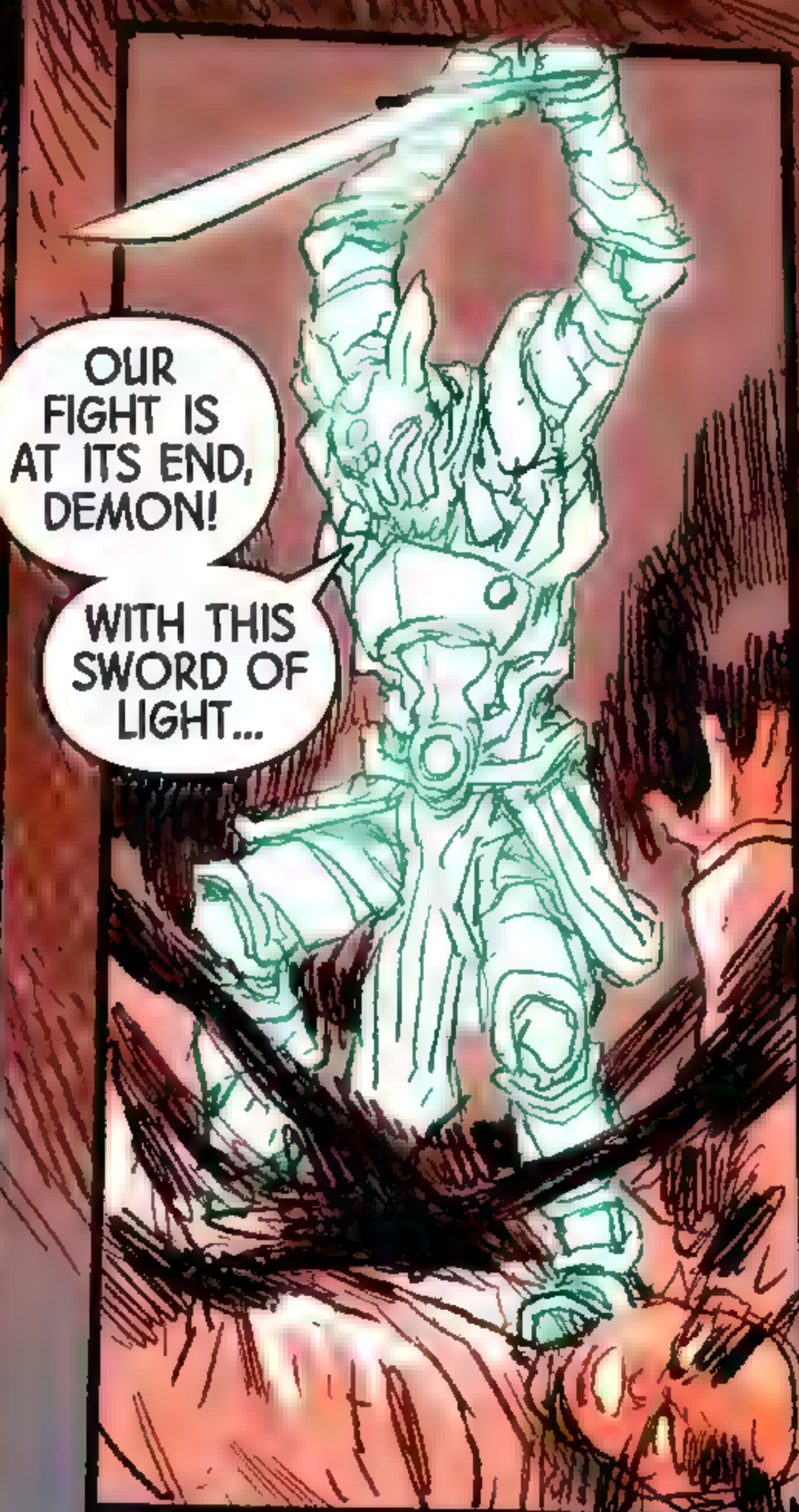
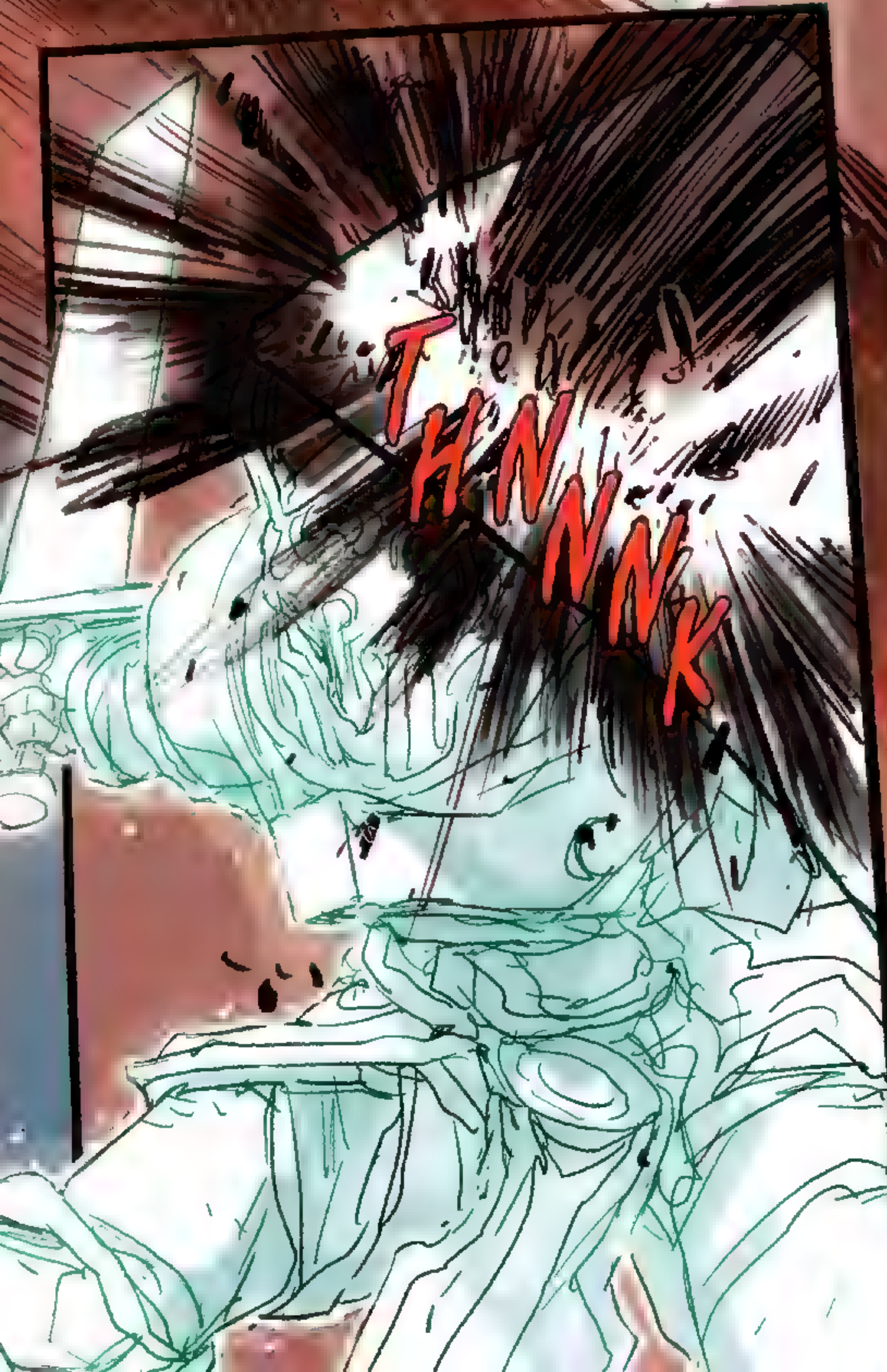
THE FAT MAN'S SOUL IS BLACK ENOUGH WITHOUT YOUR FILTHY SOOT DEFILING IT.

THAT'S NOT--

OH, YES, IT IS.

RETREAT, FOUL CREATURE!

NEVAAAAH!!





MIGHT'VE
GOTTEN
A LITTLE CARRIED
AWAY THERE.

YA
THINK?!

LARPING
ALWAYS DID
BRING OUT MY
BRUTAL SIDE.

HAPPENS
TO THE BEST
OF US.



IF I'M
REMEMBERING
CORRECTLY
THOUGH...

...LIGHT-BASED
WEAPONS TEND
TO LEAVE
HUMAN HOSTS
UNHARMED.

HOW
COULD YOU
POSSIBLY--

ADVANCED
D&D ARMS
AND EQUIPMENT
GUIDE.



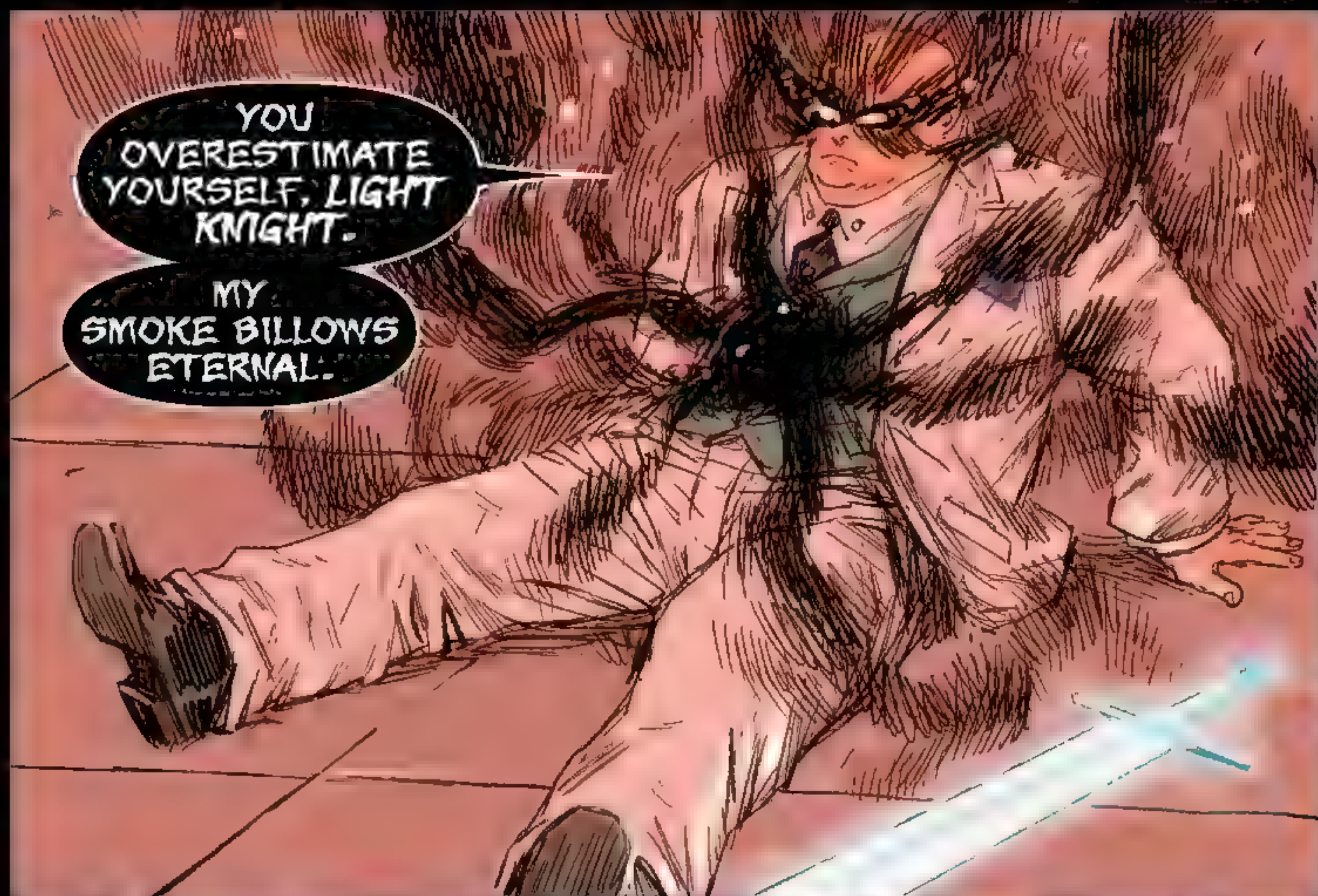
NNNNNG...
HE'S RIGHT.



I'M
FINE.

KA
KLNNNG

KLNNNG



YOU
OVERESTIMATE
YOURSELF, LIGHT
KNIGHT.

MY
SMOKE BILLOWS
ETERNAL.



THOUGH, I'LL ADMIT YOU'VE EARNED MY RESPECT.

BEN...

WHAT?

PICK UP THE SWORD, PLEASE. IT'S THE ONLY THING THAT CAN TOUCH THE SMOKE MONSTER.



OH, RIGHT... SORRY.

NOT USED TO DOING THE HEAVY LIFTING.

NO WORRIES. I'M BEGINNING TO GET USED TO THE IDEA OF DYING CONFUSED AND IRRITATED IN A PUDDLE OF SOME FOUL-SMELLING GOO.



NO, JESS. THIS TURN OF EVENTS IS ACTUALLY *QUITE* PROMISING.

I'M NOT SURE I AGREE.

FISK STILL WORRIES ME, OF COURSE, BUT IF URICH'S LIGHT CAN TRULY KEEP THE SMOKE AT BAY...

...WE MIGHT ACTUALLY STAND A CHANCE.



ODD HOW NEW OBSTACLES CAN MAKE THE ONCE MURKY WAY QUITE CLEAR. MOMENTS AGO, I WAS CONVINCED WE WERE SUNK, AND NOW...

YOU GET TO DM A SUICIDE CAMPAIGN FOR A SCRAWNY, MUCKRAKING PALADIN AND A PORTLY, WHITE-COLLAR WIZARD.

FOR SOMEONE WHO HATES SWORDS AND SORCERY...



...YOU CERTAINLY HAVE ALL THE TERMS DOWN PAT.

QUESTIONABLE TASTE IN MEN.

LIFELONG.

AH.

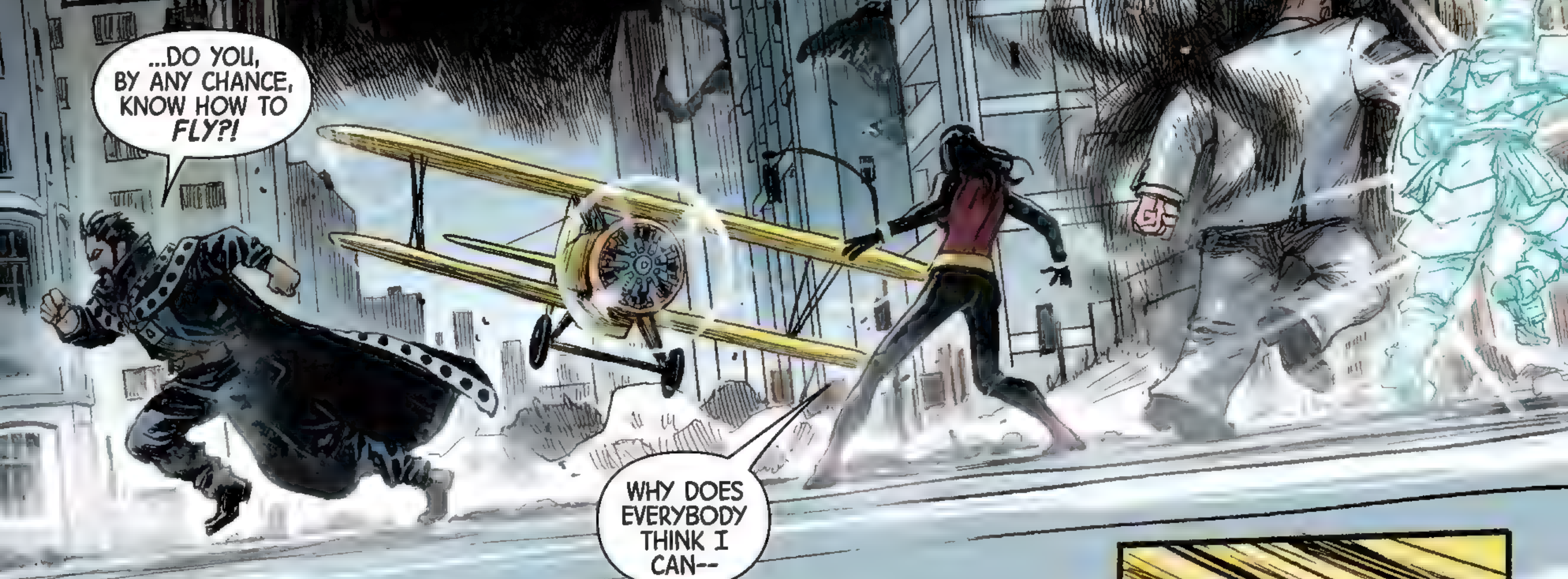


IS THAT A--

SENTIENT BIPLANE FUELED BY THE PAIN OF ITS EVERY KILL?

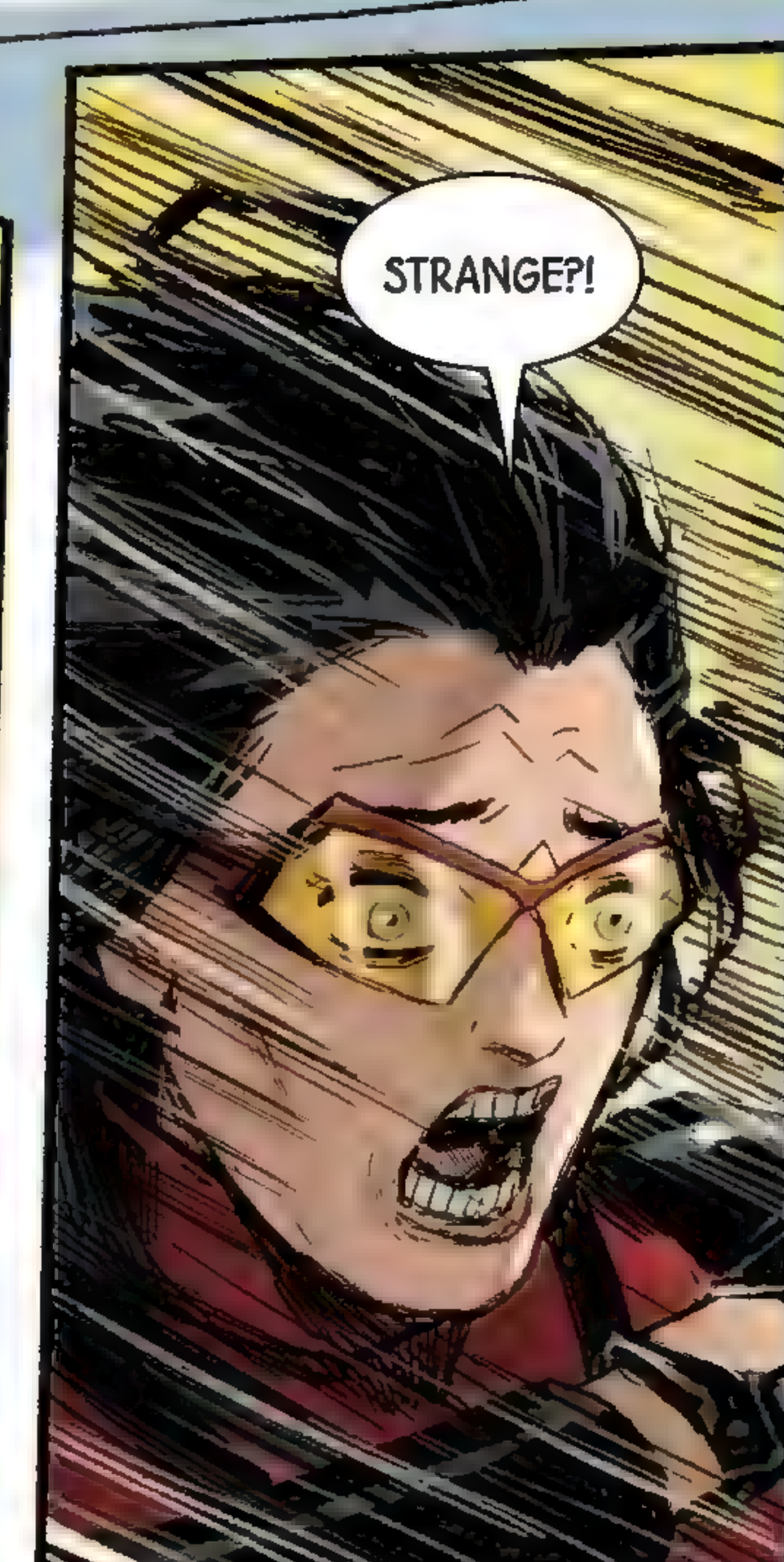
YES. IT IS.

SPEAKING OF WHICH...

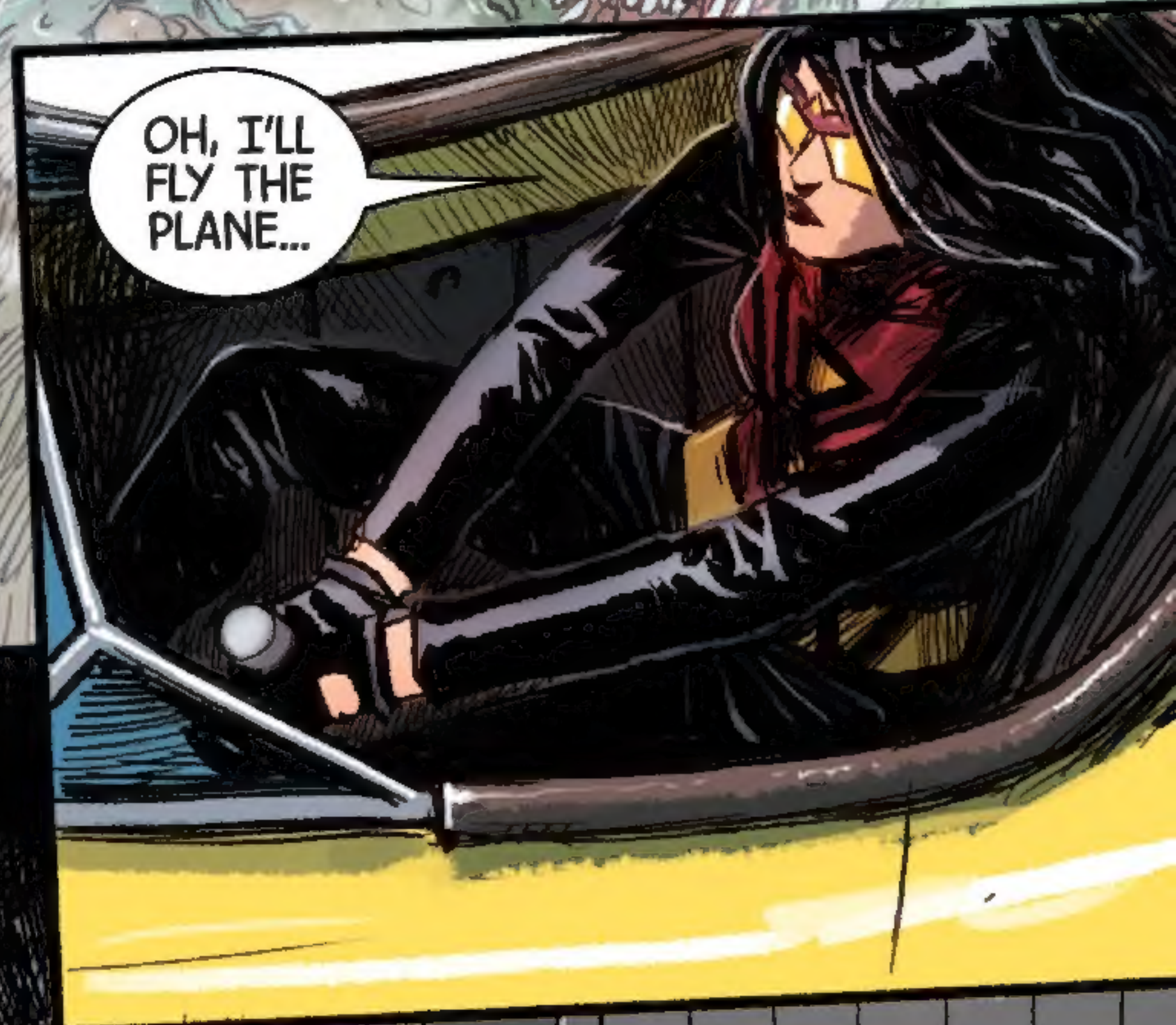


...DO YOU, BY ANY CHANCE, KNOW HOW TO FLY?!

WHY DOES EVERYBODY THINK I CAN--



STRANGE?!





BRING IT,
STRANGE.

BRING.

IT.

ON.

NEXT: IT GETS BROUGHT!

NEXT ISSUE:



Send letters to MHEROES@MARVEL.COM or 135 W 50th St, 7th Floor, New York, NY 10020 (Please mark "OKAY TO PRINT")

